

Prayer Meeting

TOPIC—ORIGIN AND VALUE OF THE SOUTH.

Week Beginning October 24.

We have always had the Sabbath; it was announced in Eden. Dr. Pierson says in regard to it: "It is one of two things that comes down to us from a sinless Eden, marriage being the other, and these two should be sacredly guarded as the only relics we have of man's unfallen state." Then he calls attention to the growth of the Sabbath law. He shows us that God has some how impressed a Sabbath Law even upon material nature. In a congress of engineers in Paris, from all parts of the world, the decision arrived at was, that machinery will last much longer if it is used but six days out of the seven. The Sabbath of man after the fall, emphasized simply rest from physical labour for man and beast. Advancing to the Mosaic system, we find a full Sabbath System involving not only the seventh day, but the seventh week, month, year, on to the seventy times seven years—the grand jubilee.

In Isaiah, representing the "Prophets" as Moses, the "Law," you have the great transition from the old Sabbath to the new, in the words: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."

Here the emphasis is on the rest from selfish pleasures and from self-seeking. All the Levitical features have disappeared and we have the forecast of what may be called the spiritual feature.

In the New Testament we have rest in worship, even the Lord himself going into the synagogue and engaging in acts of worship, as his custom was. Jesus Christ is the meeting-place of God and man, the place of the oracle, the place of sacrifice—all Sabbath types are realized in him. In Hebrews we have the final interpretation of all preceding Sabbath types: "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." It is the rest of faith, when we learn to depend upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the endwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We will get the truest value from the Sabbath as we grow into a more intimate appreciative knowledge of our Lord who has given us the Sabbath for our good. We still have the command, "Six days shalt thou labor," and, in obeying, we can be worshipping our Master; but what an unspeakable blessing it is that the six days are followed by one in which we worship by rest—when it is our duty as well as our pleasure to rest, body, mind and spirit—to enjoy the day with our Lord.

In observing the day it is helpful to study how he used the day when here on earth. The Pharisees' criticism of his and his disciples' laxness on two occasions—one the pulling, rubbing out and eating the corn when hungry, the other the healing of the withered hand—show that ceremonial observance and forms give way before works of necessity and mercy.

One of the editors of the "Christian World" writes:

In making some purchases the other day at one of Cleveland's substantial stores, an elderly clerk awakened special interest by giving a little chapter from his experience. Shortly after taking a position with the firm nearly a third of a century ago, he was asked one day by two lady customers if a certain piece of goods was all wool. He frankly told them it was not, but was part cotton. They hesitated about buying it for a little, but on his assurance that for their purposes it was all the better, because of its cotton threads, they at last decided to take it. After they left, one of the partners who had overheard the conversation, stepped up to the clerk and said, "Is that the way you usually talk to customers?" Thinking his candor was to receive a rebuke, but unable to give any other answer, he said it was. "Well," said his employer, "You are the kind of a man we want," and promoted him then and there. For more than thirty years he has been retained by the firm as one of its best and most highly valued men, and he will probably keep his place for life.

Young People's Societies

ISLAND MISSIONARY HEROES.

Topic for Sunday, October 31: Heroes of Missions in the Islands. Isaiah 32:1-4, 16-20.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: The God of the isles. Psalm 72:10-19.
Tuesday: The waiting isles. Isaiah 42:1-13.
Wednesday: The kingdom enlarged. Isaiah 51:1-6.
Thursday: Paul on Cyprus. Acts 13:4-12.
Friday: Barbarian kindness. Acts 28:1-10.
Saturday: To all the world. Luke 24:44-48.

"The islands of the sea" was a phrase significant of distance or remoteness and was used to suggest the extent of the gospel rather than any physical conformation of land and water.

The poetical use of the words, therefore, is in no sense significant of any special blessing to be given to the islands as distinguished from the mainland or continents of any part of the world.

God wills that the gospel be preached everywhere. He would have his people know that none are to be left out, and that no excuse of the distance or inaccessibility of any will be accepted of him.

As if to emphasize this, he has inclined the hearts of many of the noblest of his believers to go to the most isolated parts of the world, and has richly blessed them in their efforts to win souls to Christ.

Marsden in New Zealand, Williams in the Society Islands, Cross and others in the Fijis, Paton in the New Hebrides, Chalmers in New Guinea, Patteson in Melanesia, are names which will live forever in the honored roll of Christ's faithful workers.

There are islands made such by great seas of unbelief rolling around them. The oasis is but an island in the desert. Are there not many spots even near to our doors which have become isolated and where we may send the gospel even as to "the isles of the sea"?

The heroism that bore Paton to the New Hebrides will be needful to bear workers to the fields nearer home, where the very act of going will, as men unhappily view it now, be next to martyrdom itself. The man who goes into the home mission field to-day is really the hero of modern church life.

The success which God has given the missionaries to remote lands is an earnest of what he has in store for all who go in the same spirit to any land. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Christ's presence and companionship will insure both happiness and success. It may well be called "the believer's great partnership."

THE BLEST.

Deem not that they are blest alone
Whose days a peaceful tenor keep;
The anointed Son of God makes known
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears,
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years.

There is a day of sunny rest
For every dark and troubled night;
And grief may bide an evening guest,
But joy shall come with early light.

Nor let the good man's trust depart,
Though life its common gifts deny,
Though with a pierced and broken heart,
And spurned of men, he goes to die.

For God has marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear;
And heaven's long age of bliss must pay
For all his children suffer here.

—William Cullen Bryant.